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March 7, 2006

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Istook Backed Plan Targets Illegal Immigrants in OK

Congressman urges OK law enforcement to step up training to battle illegal immigration

Washington, DC -- Congressman Ernest Istook (R-Warr Acres) wants Oklahoma law enforcement to help battle illegal immigration by taking special training that helps them cooperate with federal authorities. Istook says the training is newly-available from the Department of Homeland Security through U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

In his role as a member of the Homeland Security subcommittee, Representative Istook pushed for nationwide funding that now allows ICE to offer a specialized five-week training course for state and local law officers. The course focuses on immigration law, civil rights and other law enforcement issues involving illegal immigration.

"We have millions of illegals who are no longer just along our borders, but are now spread throughout America, including a large number in Oklahoma. Local and state law enforcement often are in contact with them, and we need their help in enforcing the law. But officers need special training to do that job right, and now we're making it available. We need leadership from local and state government, to make sure that Oklahoma takes advantage of this opportunity," said Rep Istook. **"When detained, the illegals are turned over to ICE, and I've helped to increase ICE's resources significantly so it can pick up these illegals and return them to their own country."**

"Istook is sending letters to state and local officials, making them aware of the program and describing how they can take advantage of it." The program has already achieved numerous successes in other states. Within the next year, ICE will have trained 62 Florida law enforcement officers, 46 from Alabama and numerous others in California.

"Solving our illegal immigration problems requires a unified effort," Istook said. **"If state and local officials turn a blind eye toward illegals, it makes the problem get worse."**

To get more information on the program, contact ICE Program Manager Robert Hines at (202) 616-7366.

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